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TAGS: [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [PREF](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [JO](#)
SUBJECT: JORDANIAN DELEGATION PITCHES IDEA FOR A FEDERATION
BETWEEN JORDAN AND A FUTURE PALESTINIAN STATE

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (C) Abdul Salam Majali, a former Prime Minister of Jordan and member of the Jordanian Upper House of Parliament, led a small Jordanian delegation to Israel for private meetings with the Israeli political class -- both within and outside the GOI -- during which he advocated reviving a proposal to study the formation of a federation between Jordan and a future Palestinian state. The Ambassador met with the Jordanians at the request of Brig Gen (ret) Baruch Spiegel and Yair Hirschfeld, General Director of the Economic Cooperation Foundation, who also attended the meeting.

NOW IS TIME TO RECONSIDER THE PROPOSAL

¶2. (C) Majali suggested that, given the current state of affairs and public opinion in the Middle East, "the time has come to give peace a chance," adding that the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative warranted serious consideration. More specific to Israeli-Palestinian relations, Majali emphasized that the first step toward peace, in his view, should be for Israel to declare recognition of a Palestinian state and negotiate borders afterward. He recounted the history of the idea of a federation, noting that there was support among Palestinians, including in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), prior to Jordan's disengagement from the West Bank in the 1980s. He acknowledged, however, that momentum for this proposal has waned since then.

¶3. (C) Majali proposed specifically that a U.S. university or think tank could host a workshop where selected Palestinians, Jordanians, and Israelis could meet to elaborate the details of such a federation. Describing the makeup of the federation, Majali suggested that there would be a federation president -- a position exclusively reserved for the Jordanian king and, eventually, his successors -- as well as a Prime Minister and a bicameral parliament, with leadership positions rotating alternately between Jordanians and Palestinians. All Palestinians and Jordanians would also hold federation citizenship while concurrently maintaining their respective nationality.

POTENTIAL ADVANTAGES

¶4. (C) When asked by the Ambassador about the support for and the advantages of such a proposal, Majali claimed to have talked with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and other Palestinians about the idea, and said they were receptive to it. Moreover, his message to the Israelis was that such a federation could be an important part of the "political horizon" for both Israelis and Palestinians, for example, by reassuring Israelis that Palestinian security would be in good hands and by giving Palestinians everywhere

a credible travel document. Majali also suggested that provisions of the Jordanian/Israeli peace treaty might be adapted to apply to the Palestinian state within the federation, including the right for their nationals to own property in the other's territory -- which might help address issues relating to refugees and settlements. He contended that compensation for Palestinian refugees could be handled through the federation government, similarly to a class-action type settlement.

COMMENT

15. (C) The Ambassador asked the Jordanians specifically if they had the King's endorsement for such a proposal, and Majali admitted that all they had was his permission to explore the idea with others. Majali was not seeking anything in particular from us at this stage, but wanted us to be prepared if we receive a request along these lines from the Palestinians, whom he believes must be the ones to initiate such a project. He acknowledged that his proposal is part of a fragile framework, which should thus be kept at a low profile until the Palestinians act.

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JONES